

# **FSIS Recruiter Guide**

This guide was developed to assist FSIS recruiters in preparing for recruitment events and to aid them in responding to questions from potential applicants.

- Most pages within this guide are not intended to be “handouts”.
- HRFO will update information in this guide as appropriate. Please obtain current information from the HRD website prior to attending a recruitment event.

# How to Apply for Entry–Level Food Inspector and Veterinarian Positions

## US Citizenship Required

(updated 01/06/04)

### **Food Inspector -** (Entry level GS-5 with promotion potential to GS-7)

The Food Inspector test is no longer being offered. A new online assessment will replace the test starting in March 2004. All applicants for Food Inspector positions will be asked to apply on-line beginning in March. To be considered for this occupation, applicants will still be required to meet the qualification standards.

#### **Applicants will be asked to:**

1. Submit a federal resume that follows the guidelines in the USAJobs Website. Applicants should be sure to follow the instructions for completion provided in the Food Inspector Competition Notice (updated version will be available in March 2004).
  2. Complete an on-line questionnaire.
  3. Submit any supporting documentation (if required).
- Potential applicants interested in a job as a Federal Food Inspector, may contact HFRO beginning in March, or visit our web site at [www.foodsafetyjobs.gov](http://www.foodsafetyjobs.gov) at that time to download application information.
  - A list of locations that offer recruitment bonus can be accessed at this same website.
  - Students can apply up to 9 months before they graduate with their 4 year degree.
  - Applicants can select up to five geographic areas in which they wish to be considered

#### **GS-5 –**

Must have one year of full-time specialized experience **or** 4 year degree with at least 12 semester hours in the biological, physical, mathematical or agricultural sciences. (The Food Inspector Competition Notice contains information on types of experience which is considered “specialized.” )

#### **GS-7 –**

One year of full-time specialized experience at or equivalent to the GS-5 level. **(Education cannot be substituted for experience to qualify above the GS-5 level.)**

## **Veterinary Medical Officer -**

### **Positions typically filled at the GS-11. Some have promotion potential to GS-12**

- Apply on-line at [www.foodsafetyjobs.gov](http://www.foodsafetyjobs.gov)
- Applicants can select up to ten geographic areas in which they wish to be considered.
- Locations that offer recruitment bonus can be accessed at this same website.
- Students can apply up to 9 months before they graduate with the DVM degree.
- Application consists of on-line responses to questions, resume can be attached on-line, and supporting documents, (e.g., copy of transcript, DD214 to support claim of Veteran service), which can be mailed to:

USDA,FSIS, HRFO  
Butler Sq. West, 420C  
100 North 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55403

#### **GS-9 – DVM degree required**

After 6 months of successful performance under the accelerated program at the GS-9 level, applicant is eligible for GS-11 level.

#### **GS-11- DVM degree required**

To qualify at GS-11 level, an applicant must have graduated in the upper 25% of their class **OR** have 1 year professional veterinary experience.

#### **GS-12- DVM degree required**

Applicants who are Board Certified **may** be qualified at GS-12.

# **SECRETS TO JOB FAIR SUCCESS**

(updated 01/06/04)

## **Be Well-rested and Ready to Go!**

Allow time for set-up, so that your display and booth are ready for the attendees. Place application materials in the center of the display table, if possible, as that is the focal point of what we're trying to sell. Garnish with the giveaways. Be sure to be mindful of the length of your stay at the event, and ration career application packets/recruitment giveaways accordingly. Be enthusiastic and energetic, but not forceful. "Read" your visitors and realize that providing hard copy application material for those in a hurry, will usually suffice. Keep in mind all application and announcement/career information is available online, so providing applicants with the FSIS web site [www.foodsafetyjobs.gov](http://www.foodsafetyjobs.gov) will direct them to the necessary employment information.

## **Develop and Practice Your Introduction**

You have only a minute or two to sell FSIS, so prepare and practice your opening statement. Determine what you will say during this "moment of truth". Tailor your intro to your audience and the vacancies you have to offer them. Smile, look them in the eyes, and let them know what position(s) you're recruiting for, and why they should be interested.

## **Staff Your Booth for the Entire Event**

You have invested time and energy in this event, so don't risk missing out on a fantastic applicant. If you arrive late or leave early, you leave a bad impression of the job seekers who may want to meet you.

## **Don't Sit**

Visitors are not inclined to stop at a booth where the staff is sitting. Be approachable by standing and greeting the job seeker.

## **Take a Break**

Remember that working a booth is exhausting. It is not easy, standing all day, being bright and charming. Be sure to allow enough breaks for you or your partner to maintain a high energy level.

## **Wear Comfortable Shoes**

Clothes you feel comfortable in will help you remain cheerful as well.

## **Be Aware of All Agency Career Opportunities**

Although you may only be targeting a specific applicant pool, remember that FSIS offers a variety of career opportunities. Applicants can get a direct link to these FSIS jobs by entering through [www.foodsafetyjobs.gov](http://www.foodsafetyjobs.gov). Then: (1) click on FSIS Jobs. (2) Click on the "FSIS Jobs@USAJOBS" banner.

## **Entry Level Veterinary Recruitment**

"The Nation's Largest Employer of Veterinarians" is as impressive as it sounds. Use it.

**Federal starting salaries might not be as competitive with what the private sector has to offer, so focus on our "best in business" benefits package (paid time off, opportunities for overtime, eligibility to continue to practice privately on the side, career opportunities, etc.) When dollars-per-hour and the benefits are considered, we actually are quite competitive.**

## **Entry Level Food Inspector Recruitment**

Our Food Inspectors provide the "first line of defense" against diseased and adulterated meat and poultry. Many career opportunities exist in FSIS for those who have spent some time as Food Inspectors including CSO, CSI, Import Inspectors, etc.

# STUDENT EDUCATIONAL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

(updated 01/06/04)

The Student Educational Employment Program (**SEEP**) has two components; the Student Temporary Employment Program (**STEP**) and the Student Career Experience Program (**SCEP**).

## **STEP Component –**

Job opportunities under this component offer the student temporary employment that can provide them with a valuable work experience.

- *Employment can range from summer jobs to positions that can last as long as they are a student (in one-year increments or less).*
- *The duties do not have to relate to the students academic field of study.*
- *FSIS often uses the STEP component to hire students into clerical positions in field offices and in Washington, DC.*

We do not often need to advertise student employment opportunities under STEP, as applicants seem to find us through word of mouth, (e.g., friends or family of current FSIS employees). Interested students can be referred to the HRFO Service Section that works with the geographical area, or program area, in which the student is interested in working or to the HRD student coordinator for positions in Washington, DC.

## **SCEP Component –**

- *SCEP combines academic classroom learning with practical, on-the job experience and provides the student with paid work experience in their field of study.*
- *SCEP may lead to permanent employment after the student successfully completes their education and completes at least 640 hours of work under the student program.*

In the last couple of years, FSIS has used SCEP to hire veterinary student trainees, consumer safety officer student trainees, compliance officer student trainees, business management student trainees, etc. Interested students should routinely check with their campus career center or the Dean's office, in the case of veterinary students.

**NOTE:** FSIS will not be hiring veterinary student trainees or consumer safety officer students trainees under SCEP to begin work during the summer of 2004. We do plan to hire veterinary and CSO student trainees the following year; most likely recruiting for them in the fall of 2004 to begin working in the summer of 2005.

**Program Features Under Both Components:**

- Students may be employed year round.
- Students may have flexible work schedules.
- Open to all students...high school, under-graduate, graduate, and vocational/technical.

**Recruiters can refer students  
to this website in order to learn about  
Federal student employment opportunities is  
[www.studentjobs.gov](http://www.studentjobs.gov).**

# **FSIS and the Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps Officer**

(updated 01/06/04)

In April 2003 the FSIS and the PHS entered into a Memorandum Of Agreement which significantly expands the number of PHS Commissioned Corps Officers detailed to FSIS.

- **This benefits FSIS in the following ways:**
  1. Additional resources to fill critical positions throughout FSIS
  2. A personnel system to offer employees other than the General Schedule (GS) system
  
- **The PHS Commissioned Corps Personnel System is:**
  1. An all officer organization comprised entirely of health professionals;
  2. One of the seven uniformed services; organized around a rank structure providing pay and benefits similar to Dept. of Defense;
  3. A non-bargaining unit staff;
  4. One that offers ease of duty assignment change.

The Commissioned Corps has a variety of occupations that will help promote FSIS' public health mission. These Officers will serve in various capacities across FSIS in specific areas where there is a greater demand for scientific knowledge and judgment. PHS Officers will work as permanent staff members alongside their FSIS counterparts as veterinarians, consumer safety officers, scientists, environmental health officers, etc.

**Individuals with questions and those interested  
in applying for positions with  
PHS and being detailed to FSIS should contact:  
Captain Cynthia Pond at [Cindy.Pond@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:Cindy.Pond@fsis.usda.gov) or on 202-720-7208.**

# INCENTIVES FOR RECRUITMENT

(updated 01/06/04)

At times there is a need to offer incentives in our recruitment efforts. Recruitment Incentives can be done in a variety of ways and are sometimes necessary to attract candidates to **hard to fill positions and locations**. Listed below are various ways these incentives can work:



- **RECRUITMENT BONUS**

A recruitment bonus ranging from \$2,500 up to 25% of an employees' base pay may be paid in a lump sum to a new employee to the Federal government, for an approved occupation and location. The employee must agree to a minimum period of service of one year. Failure to complete agreement results in repayment on a pro-rata basis. **Candidates who are currently Federal employees are not eligible.**

**\*A current approved list of positions and locations is available at [www.foodsafetyjobs.gov](http://www.foodsafetyjobs.gov).**

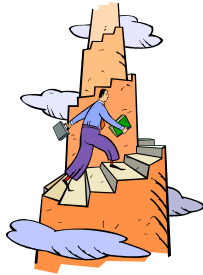
- **PAYMENT OF TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION TO FIRST POST OF DUTY**

A new employee's travel and transportation of household belongings to their first post of duty may be at FSIS expense, if the employee is hired into a occupation and/or location which is considered hard to fill. Authorized expenses are limited and do not include real estate transaction costs. A one-year service agreement is required. Failure to complete agreement results in 100% repayment of all relocation expenses.





- **ACCELERATED PROMOTIONS - VMO's hired at the GS-9 level.**



- Waives time-in-grade and qualification requirements for promotion of GS-9 Veterinary Medical Officers to the GS-11 level.
- Individuals hired at the GS-9 level are placed in an accelerated training program.
- After 26 weeks (6 months), they are eligible for promotion to the GS-11 level, upon satisfactory completion of training and recommendation of the Supervisor and approval by the District Manager.

- **REPAYMENT OF STUDENT LOANS**

**(Limited Use)** Can be used to recruit candidates for positions that are difficult to fill, possibly due to high and unique qualifications required for the position. Program manager must have a prior approval before offering. HRD must approve based on established criteria. A minimum 3-year service agreement is required. Failure to complete agreement requires repayment in full.

# CAREER PATHS

**US Citizenship Required**

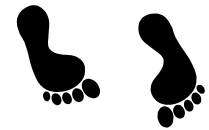
(updated 01/06/04)

## **FOOD INSPECTOR**

GS-5 (Promotion potential GS-7)

May be eligible to compete for some of the following positions when have one year of experience at the next lower grade of position advertised.

- Consumer Safety Inspector
- Food Inspector
- Food Inspector (Imports)
- Compliance Officer
- Consumer Safety Officer
- Etc.



## **Veterinary Medical Officer (In Plant)**

### Other higher promotion opportunities include:

May be eligible to compete for some of the following positions when have one year of experience at the next lower grade of position advertised.

- Supervisory VMO
- Frontline Supervisor
- CSO
- Epidemiologist
- Staff Officer
- Etc.



# Federal Job Benefits

(updated 01/06/04)

## Vacation-

- 13 days per year for 1 – 3 years of service
- 20 days per year for 3 – 15 years of service
- 26 day per year after 15 years of service

## Sick Leave-

- 13 days per year

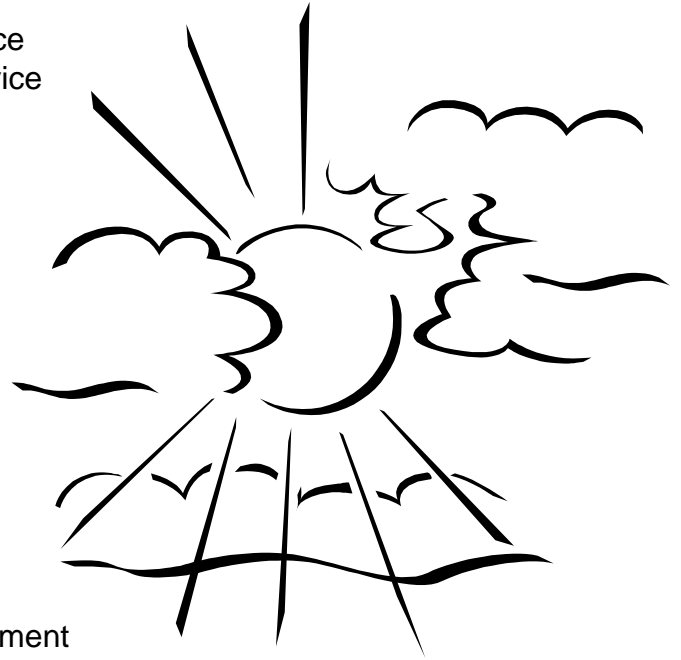
## Paid Holidays-

- 10 days per year

## Thrift Savings Plan -



Up to 5% of your salary matched by the government



## Other Benefits

**Retirement System**

**Health and Long Term Care Insurance**

**Life Insurance**